

1984 SIKRI CITIZENS COMMISSION

CONTENTS

A Brief

Preface

Introduction

Background

Sequence Of Events

Some Case Histories

Conclusions

Observations

Recommendations

Concerns

**APPENDIX 'A' - Letter to the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister,
dated 5th December 1984, together with an enclosure.**

APPENDIX 'B' - Letter from the Principal Secretary dated 6th December 1984

APPENDIX 'C' - Letter to the Principal Secretary to the PM dated 19th December 84

**APPENDIX 'D' - Letter to the Union Home Minister,
dated 20th December 1984 together with an enclosure**

**APPENDIX 'E' - A Letter from the Additional Private Secretary
to the Union Home Minister dated 26th December 1984**

APPENDIX 'F' - Letter to the Prime Minister dated 4th January 1985

APPENDIX 'G' - Letter to the Union Home Minister dated 4th January 1985

A Brief

In terms of sequence, this was the third NGO report on the November 1984 carnage. But what set it apart from the earlier reports was the fact that it was not written by any human rights activists. On the contrary, the Citizens' Commission that was set up for the purpose of probing the massacre consisted of people with impeccable "establishment" background.

The five-man commission was headed by former chief justice of India S.M. Sikri and included Badr-ud-Din Tyabji, former Commonwealth secretary and vice chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, Rajeshwar Dayal, former foreign secretary, Govind Narain, former governor of Karnataka and Union home and defence secretary, and T.C.A. Srinivasavaradan, former home secretary.

What prompted this group of eminent citizens to come together and hold an inquiry of their own – complete with public hearings and witness depositions - was the Government's persistent refusal to appoint a commission of inquiry. Compared to the earlier NGO reports, the Citizens' Commission report is understated and dour.

As befits the exalted status of its members, the Citizens' Commission began by addressing letters to the Prime Minister and Home Minister seeking interviews and information. Since it got no response from the Government, the Commission said "a large number of questions remain open." But it added: "These questions, if left unanswered, can only result in spreading further doubt and lead to adverse inferences about the role played by the administration in this crisis."

Some of those open questions relate to the failure of the administration to take preventive measures in the time gap of several hours between the attempt on Indira Gandhi's life to the announcement of her death. "We have no means by which to judge the nature of the deployment of the preventive machinery available to the authorities, nor of the adequacy or otherwise of their appreciation of the worsening situation.

Similarly, we are unaware of the nature of the briefing or instructions for action issued to field formations. The accounts furnished to the Commission do not give the least indication of any concern shown by senior police officers or others in what was happening in the

affected localities. Not having been able to hear them individually or on their behalf as a force, it is not possible to say how they occupied themselves during the situation of escalating violence.”

Its cautious approach, if anything, made the report all the more damaging to the Indian state. Especially because it confirmed all the essential charges against the rulers of the day. For instance, the Army, it said, was not only deployed late for no good reason, it was also for a long time handicapped even after that because of a “lack of coordination” with the administration and police.

The Commission also said that several Congress MPs and councillors were accused of having “instigated the violence, making arrangements for the supply of kerosene and other inflammable material and of identifying the houses of Sikhs. Some of them have also been accused of interceding with the authorities to obtain the release of their followers who had been arrested for various crimes.”

Thus, the Citizens’ Commission report served the laudable purpose of adding pressure on the Rajiv Gandhi Government to concede the demand for a judicial inquiry.

Preface

The dastardly assassination of Indira Gandhi was unfortunately followed by unprecedented violence and lawlessness in Delhi and elsewhere. The targets of the violence were essentially the Sikhs.

The nature, scale and intensity of the outrages, though directed against identifiable citizens who were made scapegoats, were an ominous warning to all peaceful and law abiding citizens. The virulence of the violence and the pattern it took caused widespread concern and alarm to all who cherish the unity and integrity of India.

Some of them, among the most experienced in public service and unconnected with factional politics, invited us to serve as a 'Citizens' Commission' to enquire into these events.

We readily accepted the task in the spirit of the statement issued by them on 16 November 1984, out of a sense of public duty and to demonstrate actively our sense of solidarity with and concern for the security and welfare of the affected community.

Our task has been handicapped by the lack of access to official sources. Our requests for interviews with the Prime Minister and the Home Minister remain unfulfilled. We had thus to rely principally on sources enumerated in the introduction to this Report.

We should like to acknowledge and record our appreciation for the cooperation and assistance of several voluntary organisations and numerous citizens, both those afflicted and others, who have given their time to place before the Commission accounts of their experiences, incidents they witnessed and their observations.

Our special thanks are due to all those who devoted time, energy and skill in assisting us in organising our work schedule, in making office arrangements and in preparing our programme of visits and interviews.

We thank our staff members, T. D. Chawla and P. N. Gulati, for the efficient manner in which they performed their duties.

We earnestly hope that as a result of our efforts, the authorities concerned will be moved to undertake speedy corrective action along the lines recommended by us. We equally hope that our report will help the general public to perceive the stark facts of the situation in their correct perspective – which is that of safeguarding national unity and integrity.

New Delhi,

18th January 1985

S.M. Sikri

Badr-un-Din Tyabji

Rajeshwar Dayal

Govind Narain

T.C.A. Srinivasvaradan

Introduction

In the wake of the fiendish violence unleashed on a particular community following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, a number of prominent citizens of Delhi issued the following statement on 16 November 1984.

"While Delhi was numbed by shock and sorrow, a wild frenzy of terror, murder, loot and arson seized large sections of the city. Its prime target was a minority community, but all peaceful citizens felt threatened and the entire city was gripped by fear while murderous mobs rampaged unhindered through the streets. In large parts of the country the violence spread in varying degrees of intensity, shaking faith in our secularism not only on the part of the afflicted community, but also of other minorities and of the general public.

"The mosaic of India's varied peoples and cultures is the very foundation of its strength, but if the bond of mutual tolerance and respect is fractured by an orgy of violence against any community, the unity and integrity of the entire structure is gravely imperilled. Such is the situation which faces our country today.

"In the capital city of Delhi the administration appeared to have been totally paralysed for three critical days while hordes of hooligans bent on loot, rapine, murder and arson held free sway. Allegations are widely prevalent that some riotous mobs were instigated, organised and often provided with transport.

"In view of the gravity and urgency of the situation which, unless promptly and effectively corrected, could cause grievous damage to the very fabric of India's unity, we, the undersigned, make an earnest appeal to Government immediately to take the following ameliorative steps:

1. To set up forthwith a Tribunal of three non-political, non-official personalities, known and respected for their objectivity, impartiality and integrity, with full powers to enquire into the events of 31 October -4 November. These would include the power to summon witnesses and evidence, official and non-official, and to take all necessary action to establish the facts and to report within six weeks of its constitution. It should particularly enquire into the widely circulating allegations that the riotous gangs were deliberately incited and led, and, if

so, to identify the culpable persons. It should also enquire into the action that may have been taken by the State administration to deal with the situation.

2. To take vigorous steps for the apprehension of the rioters and their ring leaders and for the recovery and restoration of the looted property.

3. Special courts should be set up for the speedy disposal of cases, with full powers to award deterrent sentences to the guilty, without fear or favour.

4. Immediate steps should be taken to award full compensation to all who have lost their means of livelihood to enable them to resume their normal occupations. Those whose dwellings have been destroyed or damaged or property looted and not recovered, should be fully compensated to enable them to reconstruct their lives.

5. Those in relief camps should not be compelled to return to their homes till they feel fully secure.

"The prompt adoption of these measures would, in our opinion, go some way towards providing a healing touch and which would help to restore the shaken confidence of the stricken community and of all peaceful citizens and be a deterrent to malefactors and criminals in future.

"In view of the gravity and urgency of the situation and in order to restore confidence among the people and to preserve national unity and integrity, on the insistent demand of large groups of public spirited citizens, a Citizens' Commission has been set up consisting of five eminent persons, with a view to strengthening the hands of the Government in promoting the paramount objective of achieving the national good."

The signatories to the statement included:

AIR CHIEF MARSHAL ARJAN SINGH (Retired)

Tara Ali Baig, Social Worker

DHARMA VIRA, Former Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Cabinet Secretary and Governor

KUMARI C.B. MUTHAMMA, Former Ambassador

BHAGWAN SAHAY, Former Governor

H.D. SHOURIE, Director, Common Cause

L.P. SINGH, Former Home Secretary and Governor

SOLI J. SORABJEE, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court

BRIG. SUKHJIT SINGH (Retired)

T. SWAMINATHAN, Former Cabinet Secretary and Chief Election Commissioner

The Citizens' Commission comprises the following:

JUSTICE S.M. SIKRI, Former Chief Justice of India

BADR-UD-DIN TYABJI, Former Commonwealth Secretary and Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University

RAJESHWAR DAYAL, Former Foreign Secretary, Visiting Fellow, Oxford University

GOVIND NARAIN, Former Governor of Karnataka and Home and Defence Secretary

T.C.A. SRINIVASVARADAN, Former Home Secretary

The Commission commenced its work on Monday, 26 November 1984.

At the outset, the Commission issued a statement (which was sent to the Hindustan Times, Indian Express, the Times of India, the Statesman, PTI and UNI) and which was published in several newspapers, inviting affected persons, representatives of social organisations and agencies engaged in the relief and rehabilitation of victims of the tragic events or any eye-witnesses, to meet with the Commission.

The Commission functioned from the Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, Circular Road, New Delhi.

During the course of its enquiry, the Commission:

1. Visited various relief camps and gurdwaras housing the afflicted;
2. Visited several localities, particularly the worst affected during the violence;
3. Examined numerous victims and eye-witnesses (their names are not being published to obviate the risk of victimisation, reprisal or renewed harassment by lawless elements who are still at large);
4. Received and carefully considered a large number of affidavits and written statements submitted by the sufferers;
5. Discussed the happenings and the aftermath with representatives of several organisations engaged in relief and rehabilitation work and with important journalists who had reported on the situation; and
6. Studied the reports of these incidents and developments as they appeared during those days in the main newspapers of the capital.

Background

The deplorable violence unleashed upon the Sikhs in Delhi and other parts of the country from 31 October to 4 November 1984, is undoubtedly connected with the developments in the Punjab since 1981. It is, therefore, relevant to touch upon the Punjab situation, howsoever briefly.

Without attempting to pass judgement in any manner or to apportion responsibility, we have to mention the developments which resulted in the progressive deterioration of the situation and culminated first in Operation Bluestar and, later, in the dastardly assassination of Indira Gandhi.

There were a series of negotiations between the Government of India and representatives of the Akali Dal. Some talks were publicised, others were held in secrecy. Unfortunately, all remained anfractuous. The lack of progress in the negotiations resulted, at each stage, in an increase in the violent activities of the extremist elements in Punjab. A series of incidents -- including bank robberies, intimidation and killing of innocent citizens -- occurred.

Though many of the victims were Hindus, an almost equal number were Sikhs. As individual miscreants were invariably identified as Sikhs, a smouldering resentment, though wholly unjustified, was gradually built up against an entire minority community which until then had the closest social, cultural, fraternal, familial and religious links with the majority community.

The most grievous consequence of this rift was a lamentable deterioration in the various channels of communication between the two communities. Events were distorted and muddled due to political differences and to the manoeuvring of political parties to gain ascendancy both inter se and over the two communities. While communications between Sikhs and Hindus were often misinterpreted and almost always misunderstood, the tension between them kept on mounting.

Finally the heinous act of the Prime Minister's assassination was seized upon as an opportune psychological pretext by those bent on exploiting the tension for political and material gains, to trigger off a massive, deliberate, planned, onslaught on the life, property

and honour of a comparatively small, but easily identifiable, minority community. The violence was particularly heavy in Delhi but occurred in other parts of the country as well.

Indications were frequently given to us of isolated acts which, in the context of the happenings after 31 October, appear to have been part of a pre-planned campaign to 'Teach the Sikhs a lesson'. Individuals from several areas appearing before us frequently stated that Sikh houses had been marked out in advance in their areas. On occasion we were told of persons claiming to be policemen going from door-to-door in certain areas ascertaining possession of fire-arms. Others collected information concerning the ownership of property.

These straws in the wind were significant enough for the intelligence agencies to pick up and identify the dangers of a campaign, if not of violence, at least of harassment to the Sikh community at large.

As grave an occurrence as an attempt on the life of the head of Government should immediately have led the authorities to take stringent measures to prevent any threat to the life and property of the citizens and enforce peace and security. Their failure to take such measures resulted in the perpetration of unspeakable horrors in the capital city as also in other parts of the country.

Sequence Of Events

Based on statements made before the Commission, its visits to relief camps and affected areas, contemporary newspaper accounts and information gathered from other sources available to us, the sequence of events appears to have been as follows:

31 October 1984

9.15 am Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was shot by two of her security guards and rushed to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

10.00 am News of the attempt first heard on the BBC.

11.00 am First mention by All India Radio of the attack.

2.30 pm Evening editions of several papers in the capital carried news of the late Prime Minister having succumbed to her injuries. Crowds had begun gathering at the AIIMS. Stray incidents of Sikh by-passers being assaulted occurred.

5.00 pm The President of the Republic arrived at Palam on his return from an official foreign visit. He drove straight to the AIIMS. "The cars in his entourage were stoned when approaching the hospital.

6.00 pm All India Radio announced Shrimati Indira Gandhi's death.

Thereafter, the crowds went on a rampage in several parts of Delhi, particularly in areas adjacent to the AIIMS, namely, Safdarjung Enclave, Laxmibai Nagar, INA Market and South Extension.

6.50 pm Rajiv Gandhi sworn in as Prime Minister.

By the late evening, outbreaks occurred in areas as far afield as New Friends Colony, Lajpat Nagar, Karol Bagh and New Delhi. Gurdwaras, houses, shops, factories, workshops and other property belonging to Sikhs were looted and damaged or destroyed. Sikh pedestrians and passengers (dragged out of cars or buses) were assaulted.

Evening transmissions on AIR and Doordarshan announced that orders under Sec 144 Cr.PC., prohibiting the assembly of five or more persons and the carrying of arms of all types, had been promulgated in the Union Territory of Delhi.

Late in the evening, the new Prime Minister made a broadcast to the nation appealing for calm and maintaining peace.

1 November 1984

The violence continued to spread and increased in intensity and barbarity, especially in congested areas such as Trilokpuri, Kalyanpuri, Gandhi Nagar, Sultanpuri, Mangolpuri, Janakpuri and Palam Colony.

Akashvani and Doordarshan concentrated throughout the day primarily on crowds converging upon Teen Murti House, or filing past the bier, to pay their homage to the departed leader. There were also occasional interviews with members of the public. Viewers and listeners heard the provocative slogans raised by occasional groups among the mourners — e.g., 'khoon ka badla khoon se lenge' — despite more than one attempt by the Prime Minister to stop them.

Several Members of Parliament, distinguished citizens and many other individuals reportedly made pleas to the police for assistance in different areas. Virtually the uniform answer received was that they had inadequate manpower to enable them to cope with the situation. Numerous casualties, preponderantly Sikh citizens, had been admitted to hospitals with varying injuries. Those killed by miscreants were estimated at about 60 in Delhi.

The Army was then reportedly called in aid of the civil power followed by 'shoot at sight' orders.

The then Home Secretary was reported to have said that the situation would be brought under control by the evening of Friday, 2 November. He also said that there had been only a few clashes in which a total of ten people had been killed throughout the country. Of these, five had died in Delhi — one in police firing, three in an exchange of fire between two groups while one had been stabbed.

The Lt. Governor reportedly felt that for the present there was no need to set up camps where people who were insecure could be moved. The presence of troops, according to him, would make that unnecessary.

Indefinite curfew was imposed at 6. (X) pm

2 November 1984

Reports appeared of an increase in the orgy of violence, arson, mayhem, rapine and murder; of Sikh passengers on trains being murdered; and of trains approaching Delhi being forcibly stopped by crowds in outlying areas in order to enable them to attack Sikh passengers.

The Prime Minister, along with fifteen opposition leaders, made a joint appeal to the people to end the 'madness of violence'. That evening, the Prime Minister made a second broadcast to the nation reiterating his Government's commitment to preserve communal peace.

Late that night the Prime Minister himself visited several of the affected areas.

As a large number of victims who had been rendered homeless fled in terror to available shelters provided by voluntary effort, no less than eighteen unofficial relief camps came into being.

3 November 1984 — The day of the cremation

The former Lt. Governor proceeded on leave and the then Home Secretary was appointed Lt. Governor in his place.

Large contingents of the armed forces and police were deployed for duties in connection with the funeral arrangements and to escort visiting foreign dignitaries.

Section 144 Cr.P.C. orders were relaxed from 9 am to 8 pm. Indefinite curfew was re-imposed in the capital, except in New Delhi district, from 8 pm.

The first signs of abatement in the intensity of mob depravity became evident. Apprehensions of renewed violence on the night of the cremation proved unfounded. There was also evidence of an increased effect of the army's presence and more effective enforcement of the curfew.

4 November 1984

Incidents of violence continued but there was an overall abatement and the law and order situation in the capital appeared to be limping back to normal.

According to official reports, 1,809 persons had been arrested by 4 November on charges of arson, rioting and looting. A few arrests were also made for curfew violation. However, none appeared to have been arrested for murder. The Lt. Governor is reported to have said

that 458 persons had been killed including seventeen who had died in police firing. Non-official estimates at the time put the figure at about a thousand killed.

Before proceeding to discuss our findings into the events following the assassination, it may be pertinent to recount a few case histories emerging from the statements of victims as given to the Commission. For obvious reasons no names are being mentioned.

Some Case Histories

Case 1

This widow, a former resident of Kartarnagar (trans-Yamuna area), related that their house was looted and burnt by a mob on 2 November 1984. Her husband and two sons, one married only four months ago, were dragged out of the house and mercilessly beaten. Thereafter, kerosene was poured over the three men and they were set alight. No police or army was in evidence at the time. She could, she said, identify the person who killed her husband. Though she did not know his name, she was definite about the name of his father: a weaver of the area. She had originally come from Rawalpindi at the time of Partition. This was her second nightmarish experience of mob fury during which she had lost everything, including three male members of her family.

She was accompanied by a completely dazed girl, hardly 16 years old, widow of her recently-married and recently-butchered son. This young girl sat through her mother-in-law's harrowing testimony shedding silent tears of grief and despair.

Case 2

According to this widow, mobs came to her neighbourhood at about 9 am on 1 November and began stoning Sikh houses in the vicinity. Sikhs who happened to be out were advised by the police to return home and stay indoors. They followed this advice and locked themselves inside their homes. Soon after, the crowds returned and started breaking into individual Sikh homes. The men were dragged out, beaten badly and burnt alive. Then the houses were systematically looted and most of them set on fire.

The Sikh residents of the area owned their homes. According to this woman's estimate there were approximately 35 to 40 Sikh homes in the area, almost all of which had been destroyed and 55 men brutally murdered. Only five men from the area survive, owing their escape to their absence from home for one reason or another.

Case 3: Burning of Khalsa Middle School Sarojini Nagar

On the afternoon of 1 November, at about 3.30 or 4 pm, a mob of about 250-300 men came to the school which has 525 pupils of whom 65% are non-Sikhs. The mob first set fire to the tents and the school desks. Thereafter, they demolished the boundary wall of the school.

They then entered the building and broke open the steel cupboards and looted them. They stole the school typewriter, instruments belonging to the school band, utensils, etc. Two desks and seven steel cupboards were seen being taken away. They destroyed the library and scientific equipment in the laboratory. The school building was burnt as also the Headmaster's scooter.

There were seven or eight policemen standing by who witnessed the mob's activities but did nothing to stop them. When asked to prevent the mob from damaging the school, they said that they could do nothing. No arrests are reported to have been made nor has any other action been taken. The FIR was lodged on 7 or 8 November.

The Sikh SHO of the police station, located within sight of the school, is understood to be a relative of a Congress-1 leader. He is said to have been beaten up on 31 October while in uniform, and was not to be seen (he was either in hiding or under orders — the witness could not say) from 31 October to 2 November.

It was further conveyed to the Commission that even though the school imparts free education and is in receipt of a Government grant, no repairs of any nature had begun as on 18 December 1984. Neither was any furniture nor other equipment — not even books and stationery — provided.

Case 4

A social worker informed the Commission that he had been associated with the Shakkarpur Camp as a voluntary relief worker since 6 November. The camp had been set up on 3 November and the administration had forcibly closed it on 13 November. When asked how it had been 'forcibly closed' down, he replied that the water supply had been cut off. He then asked the authorities how they would assist the inmates to return to their original homes and was told that they would be returned in the same way by which they had been brought to the camp!

Case 5

A survivor from Mangolpuri, who had been operating his own scooter-rickshaw in shifts jointly with his brother, had been brought to a relief camp on 3 November by the army or CRP, he was not sure which.

He related that there was increasing tension on 31 October after the news of the attack became known. He went to his neighbour for shelter and was given protection but told to cut his hair, which he refused to do. The following morning when a crowd came around, his neighbours asked him to leave their house. Sikhs emerging on the street were seized and their hair and beards were forcibly cut. The mob, who, he said, was from the same locality, thereafter indulged in violence and looted individual homes. However, the damage done was mainly to the woodwork. Some movable property was stolen.

Very early on the following morning, at about 4 am, the crowd returned, dragged the men out of their homes and beat them up. The neighbours pleaded for their lives and they were thus saved but only for the time being. In the evening the neighbours were also threatened with violence and that silenced them. Then five persons of his family — his brother, brother-in-law, uncle and two cousins — were belaboured with sticks and rods and burnt alive. Attempts to rape some of the women were, however, thwarted. The witness himself managed to escape by obtaining refuge in the house of a Harijan woman.

On 3 November he was removed along with other survivors to a refugee camp. He named seven persons amongst the perpetrators of the crimes, one of whom was a local Congress-1 worker identified as a supporter of a former MP.

Case 6

A woman from Trilokpuri described her harrowing experience. She and her husband, a Labana Sikh, originally from Sind, had migrated to Rajasthan in 1947. About fifteen years ago they had moved to Delhi in search of better prospects. During the slum clearance drive of 1974-75, they had been resettled in Trilokpuri.

She and her husband and three of their children survive but the eldest son aged 18 was killed on 1 November.

She described the mob led by the Congress-1 block pradhan as consisting of some people from the same block and others from neighbouring blocks and nearby villages. While the block pradhan identified Sikh houses and urged the mobs to loot, burn and kill, the women were horded together into one room. Some of them ran away but were pursued to the nearby nallah where they were raped. Their shrieks and cries for help fell on deaf ears. From among the women held in the room, the hoodlums asked each other to select whomsoever they chose. All the women were stripped and many dishonoured. She herself was raped by

ten men. Their lust satisfied, they told the women to get out, naked as they were. For fear of their lives they did so, hiding their shame as best as possible. Each begged or borrowed a garment from relenting neighbours and sought shelter wherever they could.

Case 7

The Commission gathered the following facts at the Sadar Bazar gurdwara (Delhi Cantonment).

Having heard of the news of the assassination, one witness feared trouble and brought his family to the gurdwara. He found that some other families had already collected there. Leaving the women and children downstairs, the men went up to the roof from where they saw a crowd collecting at the local Congress-1 office about 200 yards away. They had come by truck at 8.30 on morning of 1 November.

This mob then advanced towards the gurdwara and started stoning the people they saw on the roof. The Sikhs had also collected some bricks which they threw at the crowd. When their supply was exhausted, the mob became emboldened and set fire to a shop which the gurdwara had rented out. The group of Sikhs, about twelve in number, collected all the swords available with them in the gurdwara and came out. The mob retreated in the face of this puny show of force. The police, who had been informed, came at about 3.30 pm. By that time, the fire had been put out. The police surprisingly expressed their inability to do anything further to help them. Consequently the Sikhs went back inside and locked the iron gates of the gurdwara.

On 2 November, the army brought refugees from other colonies in the area surrounding Palam until there were 2,000 refugees in the gurdwara. They were housed, clothed and fed entirely by voluntary effort. The gurdwara itself fortunately escaped damage.

Case 8

This victim's family consisted of his father, four brothers, mother, two sisters-in-law, his wife and children. The family owned a bakery, a confectionery, a kirana shop and a small chemical industry.

On 1 November at about 11 am, a mob of some four hundred attacked the shop and the factory. The father and the four brothers came out and pleaded with them. Some local

Congress-I workers arranged a compromise and asked them all to go back. Eight persons from the mob, who were looting inside the shops, also came out and went away.

Fifteen minutes later a bigger mob of about two thousand came and burnt the shops and the factory.

One of the local Congress-1 workers had a fair price shop in his name which, because of the complaints of the residents, had been cancelled and allotted to this family. That seemed to be the bone of contention.

The victim's house had the symbol 'Om' on the front and could not be identified as Sikh house unless it had been pointed out as such by a local person.

The victim's father, three brothers and sister-in-law were beaten and set on fire. Some liquid chemical and a powder were used as incendiary material.

The victim himself escaped by hiding in the neighbouring house of a Jat friend. He cut his hair and went to Palam airport from where he returned to the gurdwara on the 4th. There was no help from the police. There was no electricity in the locality (Sadh Nagar) for 72 hours. Army rescue work started on 3 November.

The victim, who is a young man, is left with his widowed mother, widowed sister-in-law, brother's children and his own family to look after. He is not prepared to go back to his original home, which he considers unsafe, but is ready to settle down in Delhi in a safe area and to re-establish his bakery. He has already applied for a bank loan.

The mob leader has been identified as a local Congress-1 worker, who is said to be the right hand man of a former MP.

Case 9

What follows is a summary of an eye-witness account sent to the Commission by a practising Chartered Accountant (a non-Sikh) living in New Friends' Colony. His account begins:

"Delhi had been considered by us to be a civilised city. The news of rioting coming from different parts of the country from time to time had always carried an aura of remoteness — something which could not happen in Delhi. Or so it seemed up to 30 October recently."

He continues to relate that after the announcement of Gandhi's death over the AIR, they began receiving telephone calls from friends informing them of incidents in various parts of the city — from Jorbagh, from Ring Road, from Safdarjung Enclave — of Sikhs being badly beaten up and otherwise harassed. In view of the trouble, he and a friend decided to go to the airport later that night to receive a Sikh friend arriving in Delhi.

On their way back they saw a car burning near the IIT on outer Ring Road. Then they saw a bus on fire. A little further on, they saw five taxis ablaze at a taxi stand. It was about midnight by now and, after dropping their friend at Panchsheel Enclave, they encountered several more burning vehicles and shards of glass from broken wind-screens littering the road. They saw only two policemen on the way home. Both of them were unarmed. One of them was hurling stones at the Sikhs along with the crowd. The other was urging people in the crowd to join in the attacks.

The crowd was armed with lathis, crow-bars and iron rods. They did not see any firearms, either with the crowd or with the beleaguered Sikhs.

In New Friends' Colony, they saw several Sikh-owned shops which had been set on fire. Intervening shops belonging to Hindus had not been touched.

Two trucks parked nearby were set on fire. The crowd then invaded the gurdwara opposite the shops. They ransacked the rooms in the gurdwara compound and set fire to the buildings.

Efforts to contact the police on the telephone were anfractuous. He saw no signs of a police presence, much less intervention. The absence of the police, according to him, emboldened the mob. He felt that the 'scenes of wild mourning and mass popular anger on the television were not helping in calming the fury of the mob'.

That afternoon he saw another mob looting a house in a cool and unhurried manner, without any dispute or competition among the looters. Within half-an-hour, the house had been completely ransacked and then set on fire.

At about 4 pm, while the looting was going on, the siren of an approaching police vehicle was heard. This alarmed the mob who began to disperse but the vehicle just drove by and the crowd re-assembled.

Case 10

A 75 year old army officer, having retired in 1958, narrated that a mob consisting mostly of some DTC bus drivers from Hari Nagar Depot accompanied by anti-social elements attacked some shops and nearby houses in 'G' Block of Hari Nagar. Arson followed the looting. Cars, private buses, trucks and scooters parked in that area were also burnt. The Sikh residents, assisted by Hindu neighbours of Fateh Nagar and Shiv Nagar, came out and succeeded in challenging the miscreants and driving them away.

On 3 November, at midday, the SHO of Tilak Nagar Police Station turned up in a Jeep and asked the people to go indoors. Given the previous day's experience, the residents did not trust the police and some of them continued to maintain a vigil in the streets. Seeing this, the police officer sent some constables to the army officer's house. They began abusing and beating his family members and even threatened one of them with a gun. They also beat this 75-year old man and confiscated his unloaded licensed revolver which he had owned since 1944. They dragged him by his hair to the jeep and took him to the Police Station, continuing to hit him with the butts of their guns. He was told to kill two Sikhs if he wanted to be freed.

At the Police Station he was locked up and again beaten to the point of bleeding and becoming unconscious. He was beaten by a Sub-Inspector (whom he named) who shouted that no Sikh would be able to live in the area with his hair and beard.

Among the four police personnel who had beaten him, he named two —an SI and an ASI. The following day, the police took him to Court where a case under Section 307 of the IPC was registered against him. He was locked up in Tihar Jail along with some criminals and was able to secure his release on bail only on 12 November.

Case 11

The late husband of this witness was a tea-stall owner. They are originally from Alwar. They were resettled in Trilokpuri in 1977, on a plot measuring 22.5 sq.yds., and given a loan of Rs. 2,000 to build a dwelling.

Her husband and three sons (the eldest aged 28, was a railway porter, the second aged 20, drove a hired scooter-rickshaw while the third was a boy of 14), were all killed on 1 November.

She said that on 1 November, some people went around asking the shops to down shutters. Those who had closed them, returned to their homes. She then said that the pradhan (Congress-1) of their block went around calling people to assemble, as a mob was coming to burn the gurdwara. The police soon came on the scene and warned them all to return to their homes and to stay indoors assuring them that they would be safe if they did so. When a mob first came the Sikhs came out and repulsed them. Three such waves were repulsed but each time the police came and told them to go home and stay there.

The fourth time the mob came in increased strength and started attacking individual homes, driving people out, beating and burning them and setting fire to their homes. The method of killing was invariably the same: a man was hit on the head, sometimes his skull broken, kerosene poured over him and set on fire. Before being burnt, some had their eyes gouged out. Sometimes, when a burning man asked for water, a man urinated on his mouth.

Several individuals, including her sister's son tried to escape by cutting their hair. Most of them were also killed. Some had their hair forcibly cut but were nevertheless killed thereafter.

She lost everything of value from her own home, including Rs. 7,000 in cash, a radio, a TV and other items. Despite being a middle-aged mother of four, she was nearly raped but was saved by providence. Nevertheless she was repeatedly humiliated and her clothes were torn off two or three times. She said that when the stricken women rushed out of their burning homes, the Gujjars (from village Chilla), bhangis and some others enquired from each other which woman they fancied and then proceeded to rape them. She heard people shouting to each other to kill every Sikh and that even if one escaped, it would be bad for them.

There were twenty one males in her father-in-law's family. All of them were killed. Her brother was beaten and left for dead but fortunately survived.

Case 12

This resident of Nangloi, a venerable person with a flowing white beard who looked like & patriarch, belonged originally to Rawalpindi. He had previously lost everything during Partition.

He informed the Commission that on 1 November at about 1:00 pm, many trucks and tractors with trollies full of stones came to Nangloi from the direction of Bahadurgarh. This happened at a time when the Delhi/Haryana border was said to have been sealed. The drivers and passengers let loose a region of terror in the area. They first stoned the houses, then broke open and looted them, and finally dragged out the men and killed them. He said that 65 male Sikhs had been killed in Nangloi. Only the women, two old men and small children survived. In addition to stones, the mob carried studded rods, kerosene and some inflammable powder. He alleged that a political leader came on a motorcycle and identified the houses inhabited by Sikhs. Asked how he recognised the motorcyclist he replied that he knew him personally, having gone to him for help in solving personal problems.

FIRs had been lodged on 4 and 5 November but so far no action had been taken nor any arrests made. No stolen goods had been recovered. Asked whether any women had been molested, he replied emphatically in the negative.

He also said that trains between Rohtak and Delhi had been stopped at Nangloi and Sikh passengers dragged out, beaten and murdered.

Case 13

A retired Deputy Director of Animal Husbandry, Delhi State, this witness lives on a small farm on the southern outskirts of the capital. He appeared before the Commission at his own request. He grows vegetables, breeds chicken and maintains some cattle. He also renders free veterinary services to the residents of surrounding villages who frequently come to consult him regarding problems concerning their live-stock.

He related that once the news of the assassination became widely known, feelings were aroused as a matter of course. He saw groups of people moving around and going to Sikh

residences in the area which were attacked and looted. Some chickens and a buffalo were stolen from his farm and some damage inflicted on the main building. He was not interested in going into details and declared that he did not want any compensation for himself. Nor had he any particular complaint against the miscreants whom, he felt, had been put up to their misdeeds.

He told the Commission in as many words that his major concern was for the future. What, he asked concisely, was in store for the country when anti-social forces were enabled, or were able, to perpetrate misdeeds or to break the law with impunity. He said that this was his sole concern and that he had sought an interview with the Commission only to request it to devise measures to ensure the future of the country.

Case 14

A serving army NCO made available to the Commission a copy of a letter he had sent to his superior officer. He was returning to Delhi from Amritsar on the Frontier Mail on 2 November 1984, after availing of five days' casual leave.

He states that he was witness to the stopping of trains on the approach to Delhi across the Yamuna when Sikh passengers, including some Sikh soldiers, were beaten and/or killed. After being beaten, some were thrown into the river while others were roasted alive. A few were able to save their lives after they had shaved or cut their hair. He also saw the heads and beards of dead Sikhs being shaved after which kerosene was poured over their faces and set alight so that the dead person could not be identified. After about two hours, a guard over a treasury - consignment fired three shots in the air which caused the mob to scatter and the train then moved off. Upon reaching Delhi Main Station, he says that he saw many bodies of dead Sikhs. He reported his experience to the RTO at Delhi station.

He wrote that he himself was spared because he was in uniform and that the mob told him that they were letting him off for that reason.

Case 15

On 21 December three members of the Commission visited Sultanpuri and Mangolpuri. They inspected the damaged houses and saw the terrible havoc that had been wreaked. The tales of violence were broadly similar to other accounts they had heard. The new item was that they were told that the police had fired on Sikhs who had grouped in the street for self-defence. They named a police officer who allegedly fired on the group and killed two men.

The marks of .303 rifle bullets on some houses were pointed out to the members. A spent bullet was found embedded in a wall. This police officer was still posted in Sultanpuri Police Station and continued to threaten and abuse Sikh residents.

The Commission was given several names of miscreants amongst whom was a kerosene depot holder, who was said to have supplied free kerosene oil. The others named were the block pradhan (Congress-I), another oil dealer and a Congress-I worker described as a special confidant of a prominent Congress-1 leader.

The local perpetrators of the violence continue to threaten and intimidate the remaining residents, almost all of whom at that time were women and children. Nearly all the men had gone to Rajasthan and were planning to stay there till at least after the elections. The Commission was told of the harassment of a Muslim resident of the area, who had given protection and assistance to the Sikhs for which he had been beaten up. He was threatened, even as late as on 12 December, for continuing to give them advice and assistance.

Case 16

This victim, originally from Alwar, has resided in Delhi for about 25 years. In 1977, he had been moved along with others to Block 32, Trilokpuri. He operated his own cycle-rickshaw and owned a pucca house consisting of two rooms.

He told the Commission that out of the nine male members in his family, seven had been killed. Only he and one brother survive. The gist of his gruesome experience is as follows:

The killings took place on the afternoon of 1 November. The usual method was to make the victims immobile by beating them. Then kerosene was poured over them and they were set on fire. He mentioned that, earlier, a police havildar, whom he named, and two constables had come to the area and when they saw a group of Sikhs gathered to defend themselves, the havildar shot and killed one of them. He named three local political figures as having been leaders of the aggressive mob. When the Sikhs grouped, the mob dispersed. But the police persuaded them to return to their respective homes. When they returned and locked themselves in, the mobs came again and meted out broadly similar treatment to each house.

They first knocked at the door asking the inmates to come out. If they did not, the door was broken open and the inmates were dragged out. If they opened the door, they got the same treatment. They were first beaten, and sometimes knocked senseless; thereafter kerosene was poured over the individual who was then set alight. In almost all cases, the neighbours did not help. Rather, they participated in the violence. He said that four types of cases had been registered; assault and robbery, rape, arson and murder. There had been no action so far; a few culprits who had been arrested were released within a few days and were still at large and threatening the people. No efforts had been made to recover stolen property and none had been returned to the owners.

He also alleged that bank officials and/or civil servants had indulged in fraud or mischief while distributing the cheques covering the compensation stipulated by the Government.

Case 17

This witness is a raagi (performer of kirtan) employed by the Delhi Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. He informed the Commission that, being on duty that morning at one of the gurdwaras, he left home at about 7 am on 1 November and disembarked from a bus at Punjabi Bagh to catch a connecting bus. He was seized by the crowd and roughed up. His hair was forcibly cut but he managed to escape. He returned to his house, collected his family and managed to reach safety. It took him some time to round them up. During this time he saw the local dealer in kerosene oil and a local Congress-1 leader supplying free kerosene to the crowd. He saw a woman who was five months pregnant being dragged into a house. She did not emerge for a considerable time.

They were taken to a relief camp on 3 November. FIRs were lodged on 4 or 5 November but no action had been taken. The same people who brutalised them continue to threaten them and joke about the Sikhs. Asked how he knew that the perpetrators were Congress-1 men, he replied that they were all shouting slogans such as 'Indira Gandhi Zindabad' and 'Sajjan Kumar Zindabad'.

Case 18

During its visit to S.S. Mota Singh School Camp, Narang Colony, the Commission heard a general account from the President and Secretary of the local Cooperative House building Society. The general pattern of violence was described as follows.

A group of urchins, led and encouraged by some adults, were collected and supplied with free liquor, iron rods, kerosene or petrol. They then went on a rampage beating individuals, of whom some were burnt. Only Sikh houses were burnt — and these were identified by one of the leaders. Those who escaped and went to the police for assistance were ignored or, worse, ill-treated by the police themselves. Such police personnel were known to have instigated killings for fear of being identified by the victims.

A typical police report would read somewhat as follows: 'A small group was gathered at a point when they were faced by a large number of Sikhs with kirpans. Feeling threatened they began attacking Sikhs.'

No searches were made to recover stolen property. The police only went around the residential areas appealing to persons to surrender stolen goods. While some items were recovered in this manner, not even 10% of them had been returned to the legitimate owners.

In the Janakpuri area, fourteen gurdwaras were burnt. The building of S. S. Mota Singh School had been burnt and the metal door destroyed — and the local police station is only 250 metres away. At a nearby school, the building and eleven buses had been burnt. Attempts to get police intervention were infructuous.

Several people had seen a prominent Congress-1 politician's brother-in-law advising or instigating the mobs. They also saw young men coming to the crowd on motorcycles, presumably to convey instructions or give guidance.

The residents of the area were upset with the Congress-I whose representatives, they firmly believed, were responsible for the violence. They were even more upset that after the violence no representatives of either the Congress-1 or representatives of any other political party came to sympathise with them or give them any relief.

Conclusions

As a result of our enquiries we have come to certain prima facie conclusions.

Before we proceed to state them, we wish to emphasise that we had, at an early stage, addressed a communication to the Prime Minister (Appendix 'A') seeking an interview. Along with it, we sent a note containing positive suggestions for immediate remedial action which, in our view, would have helped to provide a measure of reassurance to the sufferers and, indeed, to all law-abiding citizens. But, we were unable to obtain an interview. Nor have we been informed if our suggestions have received attention or consideration.

We had also addressed a letter to the Union Home Minister (Appendix 'D') who in the Cabinet is responsible for the peace and good governance of the Capital, which is essentially a Centrally administered area. Along with that letter, we had appended a detailed questionnaire to which we had sought answers to be discussed in an interview. These questions, in our view, go to the heart of the problem. They suggest preventive, corrective and retributive action against the miscreants; and propose ameliorative measures to restore public confidence.

Despite reminders, we have not been given an interview and the questions, which are germane to our enquiry, remain unanswered by the authorities directly responsible. In the absence of authoritative official responses to those questions, we have had perforce, and so far as was possible, to ferret out the required information from whatever sources were open to us. Nevertheless, a large number of questions remain open. In the text of our report, we have had frequently to refer to these gaps. These questions, if left unanswered, can only result in spreading further doubt and lead to adverse inferences about the role played by the administration in this crisis.

A progressively deteriorating political situation in the Punjab, over the previous three years or so, became the prelude for the worst carnage across the country since Partition. The brutal killing of Indira Gandhi sparked off these atrocities. The remarkable uniformity in the pattern of the crimes committed, with some local variations, strongly suggest that at some stage the objective became to 'Teach the Sikhs a lesson'. The incredible and abysmal failure of the administration and the police; the instigation by dubious political elements; the equivocal role of the information media; and the inertia, apathy and indifference of the official machinery; all lead to the inferences that follow.

Role of Administration and Police

A climate of violence and terrorism had been building up in the Punjab and Delhi for some time along with the accompanying danger of political assassinations. This should have necessitated the taking of adequate security and preventive measures, particularly for the protection of leading political personalities.

The Commission is of the view that the time gap, between the attempt on the person of the late Prime Minister and the official announcement of her death, should have provided the administration with more than adequate notice for taking preventive measures against civil disorder and violence.

Numerous charges have been made concerning the virtual absence of the police on the roads, even later in the evening when a number of incidents were known to have occurred. Where any police presence was at all in evidence, there have been accusations that they were apathetic, indifferent or, worse, gave active encouragement to the mobs. The imposition of prohibitory orders under Sec. 144 Cr. P.C later that evening suggests that information had been received regarding the occurrence of incidents, as well as of the possibility of an escalation of the violence. No evidence of any serious attempts to enforce prohibitory orders either during the night of 31 October, or on the following morning, has come to our notice.

In the absence of relevant information from official sources, it is not possible to comment on the adequacy of the communications system. However, whether or not detailed information about what was happening was available to the administration, it is evident that a certain paralysis of decision-making had gripped the authorities.

We have no means by which to judge the nature of the deployment of the preventive machinery available to the authorities, nor of the adequacy or otherwise of their appreciation of the worsening situation. Similarly, we are unaware of the nature of the briefing or instructions for action issued to field formations. The accounts furnished to the Commission do not give the least indication of the presence or active concern shown by senior police officials or others in what was happening in the affected localities. Not having been able to hear them individually or on their behalf as a force, it is not possible to say how they occupied themselves during the situation of escalating violence.

Again, based on information before us, we learn that some trouble-makers were arrested in the initial stages but there is no evidence to suggest that any systematic steps were taken to restore a sense of security or confidence amongst the residents of the several localities which were subjected to continuing outrages during these four days. Nor is there any information regarding investigations into crimes of looting, mayhem, arson, murder, rape, abduction, etc., having been undertaken. Again, there is no information of perpetrators being prosecuted.

On the contrary, accusations abound of those who were initially arrested having been freed on police bail. The quantum of bail accepted by the police from looters, arsonists and those suspected of murders and other heinous crimes were said to have been as ridiculously low as Rs. 250, or a personal bond or the mere production of a ration card. Even those arrested for brutal killings were released by the police either on bail or, in several instances, reportedly at the intercession of some political leaders.

Such interventions have not only contributed to politics becoming a shield for criminals, but of providing a section of law-breakers with immunity from legal retribution. The Commission was told that in some areas the police, instead of searching for and retrieving looted property, appealed to the looters to hand it over voluntarily, in return for which the police would grant them immunity from prosecution.

Role of the Army

The role of the army is crucial to the events as they unfolded. When the civil power is unable to control a situation of grave disorder with the means at its disposal, it may call upon the military authorities to its aid. Such was emphatically the situation in Delhi even before the army was called in.

Whenever the civil authorities call the army to their aid, it is their bounden duty to make the optimum use of this help by establishing close and intimate liaison with them, giving them full information regarding the disturbed areas and to assist them in all possible manner so as to enable them to be fully effective. When, however, the army was ultimately inducted, its personnel were handicapped in their functioning by the following factors:

1. Lack of effective coordination between Delhi Administration, the police and the army. Surprisingly, there was no central control point. The Administration functioned from Old Delhi, the police from Indraprastha Estate and the army from the Cantonment;

2. Inadequacy of strength initially deployed;

3. Inadequate knowledge of the recently developed areas. According to some submissions to the Commission, the army units were equipped with old maps which did not include the more recent residential colonies, e.g., all the trans-Yamuna colonies;

4. Lack of co-operation from some police personnel who, it has been alleged, at times even deliberately misled army units who asked for directions;

Despite these handicaps the army, true to its tradition, acted with commendable efficiency in curbing the violence and rescuing many fugitive.

Role of Political Parties

Many who came forward to relate their experiences and provide eye-witness accounts to the Commission, have specifically and repeatedly named certain political leaders belonging to the ruling party. These included several MPs in the outgoing Parliament, members of the Delhi Metropolitan Council and members of the Municipal Corporation. Scores of political functionaries in local areas or blocks and area pradhans were also named. They have been accused of having instigated the violence, making arrangements for the supply of kerosene and other inflammable material and of identifying the houses of Sikhs. Some of them have also been accused of interceding with the authorities to obtain the release of their followers who had been arrested for various crimes.

We have been equally disturbed by the apathy and ambivalence of other political parties. We have received no information that any of them played any significant role in providing either protection or shelter, relief or succour, in any of the affected localities. It is a sad commentary on the political life of the capital that at the moment of its dire need, political activists should be accused of either active instigation or inexcusable apathy.

Role of the Information Media

The role of the media, both official and non-official (comprising Akashvani and, Doordarshan as well as the press), is of vital importance, particularly at times of crisis.

Akashvani and Doordarshan, having by far the larger coverage, naturally have a greater impact and reach, especially in a population like ours which has a high percentage of illiteracy.

It became immediately apparent that the coverage of the crisis by the official radio and visual media, beginning with news of the assassination, had not been formulated with adequate care and foresight in relation to the psychological impact of their transmissions. A general impression is prevalent that the information contained in such broadcasts is derived only from official sources unless otherwise indicated.

In the circumstances, it was all the more necessary at this critical juncture that the greatest care and prudence should have been exercised in selecting the material for transmission. While this aspect has greater validity in the case of prepared statements and texts, it is equally pertinent in the case of live coverage.

As examples of impolitic broadcasts which had a damaging effect, we cite three: (a) Premature disclosure of the religious identity of the two assailants; (b) the failure to monitor the provocative slogans raised by the crowds or to edit the over-emotional interviews with members of the public; and (c) earlier statements mistakenly describing the killings as being due to an 'exchange of fire' which gave the erroneous impression that there was fighting between the two communities.

On the whole, the national press and individual correspondents rendered a great public service in bringing to light the gory events in different localities as they occurred from hour-to-hour. The reporting was generally factual and detailed and editorial comments, by and large, responsible and constructive. But, in some cases, sections of the press failed to exercise adequate care and restraint in their presentation which at times had the effect of exacerbating feelings rather than in assuaging them.

Reactions and Attitudes

Efforts were made by responsible and well-meaning citizens, from the very day of the outrage, towards minimising the effects of the expectedly sharp reactions to it.

Unfortunately, every attempt to seek the intervention of authorities at the highest possible levels failed, as became apparent from subsequent developments, to produce any effect. Whatever instructions or orders may have been issued either did not reach the functional levels of the administration and the police or, if they did, were disregarded. Even some units of the fire brigade were unable to proceed to the scenes of the conflagrations because they were threatened by violent mobs and the police were unable, or refused, to provide them with protection.

Even more deplorable was the almost universal complaint heard from those interviewed, of the apathy, indifference and on occasion complicity of many members of the police force, especially at the junior level. Even if a large portion of the Delhi Police had to be deployed for funeral duties and the security of foreign delegates arriving in Delhi for the occasion, there was still enough police strength available to control the situation, had it been effectively deployed. It is a regrettable fact that the administration failed lamentably to use the available police force in an effective manner. If, indeed, the available police force was deemed insufficient to enforce public order, it is pertinent to ask why additional forces such as the CRP and BSF, that were standing by, were not inducted earlier? Also, what were the reasons, when the situation continued to go from bad to worse, for the delay in calling in the Army?

We are also surprised at the initial attempts of the administration to minimise the gravity of the situation. Both the Home Secretary and the then Lt. Governor were quoted in the media as having said as late as on 2 November that there was no need to establish relief camps since the very induction of the army would bring the situation under control. At that very time, some eighteen relief camps, providing shelter to those who had escaped the carnage, had already sprung into existence. Also, the then Home Secretary was quoted in the press as saying on 1 November, that only five persons had been killed in Delhi, when unofficial estimates were considerably higher.

When the gravity of the situation was ultimately realised by the administration, some efforts were made to take care of the afflicted. The situation called for imagination and sympathy but the measures taken were, unfortunately, not equal to the challenge. Most functionaries approached the problem in a casual) haphazard and disinterested manner. What was most unfortunate was their failure to harness fully and effectively the

spontaneous and generous cooperation offered by the voluntary relief agencies who had become active in the field when streams of panic-stricken survivors began fleeing in search of security and succour. The large number of voluntary shelters at gurdwaras and other places, where many victims had sought refuge, were not even recognised by the administration.

It must also be recorded with regret that virtually all the official relief camps were closed down prematurely. From most of them the inmates were dispersed forcibly, including even those who had no homes to return to, theirs having been razed to the ground. Those who were psychologically averse to returning to areas haunted by traumatic memories or where the murderers and arsonists continued to roam about with impunity, were also evicted from most camps. Most of them simply fled to the camps run by gurdwaras or by voluntary agencies.

Here, however, we must also record our sense of relief at having heard from some of the afflicted, of individual officials, both from the administration and police, who acted and behaved with commendable courage, initiative and rectitude. We should ourselves also like to commend them.

Estimates of Damage done during the Violence

It has not been possible to obtain any overall reliable figures of the extent of the damage.

During the four days of mob rule over large areas of Delhi, the loss of life and property was staggering. According to responsible estimates, well over two thousand were murdered, leaving behind over a thousand widows and numerous orphans. Sikh, educational institutions, several large and many small houses were burnt. Trucks, taxicabs, three-wheeler scooters, cars, motor-cycles and scooters were burnt in their hundreds. Movable property, cash and jewellery were stolen or destroyed. Factories and business premises, together with their machinery and stock-in-trade, were looted, damaged or destroyed.

A disturbing feature of this occasion is that for the first time in the history of mob violence in India, a systematic attack was made on places of worship. Of about 450 gurdwaras in Delhi some three-quarters are reported to have been damaged or destroyed.

The loss to the nation is phenomenal.

Voluntary relief agencies

In the event, it was left almost entirely to non-official agencies to provide cooked food, medical relief, clothing, shelter and, most important, psychological re-assurance to the ever increasing number of victims. By 4 November, when there was some evidence of an abatement in the violence, there were already an estimated 50,000 people housed in temporary shelters. We understand that by 5 November there were no less than twenty-eight such relief centres, only ten of which had been recognised by the administration.

We have observed, with the greatest admiration and appreciation, the fine work done by the voluntary agencies. Some of them virtually came into being overnight, gallantly rallying to the aid of their suffering fellow citizens. Numerous citizens, mostly young, from colleges and homes, housewives and social workers sprung into spontaneous action. They organised voluntary efforts to provide food, clothing, shelter, medical aid, soap and toiletries. Their long-term efforts consisted of re-equipping families with basic household needs such as bedding, utensils and other basic necessities to enable those who were willing and able to return to their original homes to do so. But the most invaluable, and onerous, contribution made by them that won our admiration, was to console widows and the others bereaved.

Motivations

There is a mixture of varying considerations that contributed to the escalating orgy of violence whose virulence began to subside only after four days of unimpeded, uninhibited mob sadism and viciousness.

Understandably, there was a deep and widespread sense of shock and sorrow at the assassination of Gandhi. It is a fact that large numbers of Sikhs also shared in this sentiment of grief and revulsion.

Unfortunately, instead of this national calamity being the occasion for the exercise of the utmost caution and restraint, certain elements exploited the situation as a pretext for rousing public feelings and channeling them into the dangerous direction of seeking revenge against a particular community for partisan advantage.

The initial motive for what followed was anger which found expression in inflicting damage to property, concentrating on that belonging to Sikhs.

This anger was then aggravated and directed into outrages of a deliberately organised nature. The basic provocation was provided by the spreading of rumours, some of them of a most incredible nature. Currency was given to wildly exaggerated accounts of the jubilant reactions of Sikhs to the news of Gandhi's murder — many were said to have distributed sweets or illuminated their homes. On the night of 1/2 November numerous citizens received telephone calls or were otherwise told that the city water supply had been poisoned. The implication was that it was Sikh extremists who had done this.

Allegations circulated like wildfire that truckloads and a train full of dead Hindus had arrived from Punjab and that Sikh students danced the bhangra on hearing of Gandhi's death. Most of these rumours were found upon investigation by social workers to be without foundation. But, in the highly surcharged atmosphere of suspicion and distrust then prevailing, they were sufficient to intensify the feelings of anger against the Sikhs.

A University Professor investigated the allegation that some Sikh students danced the bhangra. Her findings, which were published in a newspaper, revealed that some Sikh students had been rehearsing for a College cultural show and that the bhangra was one of the featured items. As soon as they heard the news of the assassination, they stopped their rehearsal.

The element of greed and envy against the relatively more prosperous life-styles of Sikh neighbours added a further motive particularly in poor and congested areas. The arson indulged in widely, both in the poorer and more affluent areas, was generally due to mass frenzy. The killings which were widespread, especially in the outlying colonies, were the result of the instigation of local political cadres who mobilised some political workers and criminal elements and hoodlums from neighbouring villages as well as from the neighbourhood itself. In some areas, especially the congested and poor, women were raped and molested which was a depraved expression of the sadism and lust of the mob.

The outrages and crimes committed, as the Commission noted during its enquiries, were instigated and directed to a large extent by political elements abetted by the indifference, if not active complicity, of the custodians of the law.

Relief and succour to the victims

The scales of relief and assistance announced for the afflicted are Rs. 10,000 for a death or for a completely destroyed home; Rs. 5,000 for houses substantially destroyed, Rs. 2,000 for injury, and Rs. 1,000 for minor damage to a home. This is woefully inadequate in the view of the Commission. No compensation is offered for domestic effects looted or destroyed, nor is there proportionate compensation for a larger house.

The contents of shops and business premises have not been taken into consideration at all. Nor has any compensation been offered for loss of machinery or industrial assets or other means of livelihood with regard to the large number of trucks, cars, taxis and scooters destroyed. Some initial relief or compensation should have been offered to enable survivors to resume earning their livelihood.

But even these inadequate amounts, where approved, have in some cases been mulcted during disbursement by the distributing functionaries. This evil of preying on the distressed must be ruthlessly stamped out by the authorities concerned.

Regardless of the inadequacy and manner of disbursement of compensation, the more important aspect is the provision of practical assistance for rehabilitation. This has to take into account not only the physical factors involved but the psychological circumstances of each situation.

To return a widow to the scene of her traumatic experience, to herd them all in a centralised location, or how best to rehabilitate them are questions to which careful thought (in consultation with the voluntary and social workers who have gained their trust) should be given and early action taken. It is essential not only to relieve their misery to the extent possible but also to enable them to be integrated into society in full safety and security as equal citizens.

When we were finalising this Report, we read of certain additional relief measures announced by the Delhi Administration. We note this welcome development though still more needs to be done.

Observations

The disturbances in Delhi did not involve clashes between any two warring factions, each inflicting whatever damage it could on the other. They were entirely one-sided attacks on members of the Sikh community and their property, often accompanied by arson and murder, rapine and loot. In some localities the outrages amounted to a massacre of innocent persons. The whole community was unfortunately made a scapegoat for the reprehensible crime of a couple of crazed fanatics who happened to be co-religionists.

There were no instances of pitched battles or clashes or active retaliation by Sikhs at large against Hindus at large. On the other hand, the general attitude and reactions of non-Sikh neighbours and friends fell broadly into four categories:

1. Hindu neighbours actively assisting Sikhs under attack to the extent of giving them shelter at the risk of endangering their own lives and property. Some cases of loss of or damage to property suffered by Hindus doing this came to our notice.
2. Hindu neighbours, while refusing shelter to Sikhs so as to safeguard their own security, did not join in attacking them either.
3. In some cases, especially in congested areas, Hindu neighbours acted against the Sikhs to the extent of pointing out Sikh homes to miscreants.
4. In the poorer areas, Hindu neighbours by and large joined in the attacks on the Sikhs, though here also we were told of some neighbours extending shelter.

The Commission did hear some accounts of fighting between Hindu mobs and groups of Sikhs. These were however isolated instances of Sikhs defending themselves from attacking mobs.

Recommendations

In view of the considerations contained in our report, we would recommend that a Commission of Inquiry —set up in accordance with the relevant law and consisting of eminent non-official and non-political personalities, known and respected for their objectivity, impartiality, integrity and experience — be constituted to ascertain all the facts concerning the events that took place between 31 October and 4 November in Delhi.

Our conclusions make it amply clear that the first and most essential responsibility of the Government should be to identify all the culprits, regardless of their social, political or economic standing, and to deal with them in strict accordance with the law of the land. Many of them have been named or identified on several occasions. They must be brought to trial without any further delay.

To facilitate comprehensive and expeditious investigations, an adequate number of special investigation teams, consisting of experienced personnel of known integrity and competence, should be constituted forthwith. To ensure speedy disposal of such cases, special courts, competent to award deterrent sentences without procedural delays, should be set up — under a special law, if necessary.

Only such steps will convince the people that the Government does not allow any individual, however influential or well-placed, to violate the law with impunity. The supremacy, uniformity and majesty of the law must be upheld.

We have referred to the utter failure and dereliction of duty of the police in Delhi. Some of them have been accused of instigating or even participating in the criminal acts committed during the fateful five days. Wherever such officials are found to have committed crimes, they should be prosecuted according to the law. Negligence or dereliction of duty calls for exemplary punishment after departmental enquiry. Where appropriate, recourse could be had to the proviso to Article 311 of the Constitution.

The scales of compensation announced so far are inadequate and need to be reviewed. We recommend that full compensation be given to all who have lost their means of livelihood, to those whose dwellings have been destroyed or damaged or whose property has been looted and not recovered, and to those whose large or small shops or factories have

sustained damage. Special consideration should be given to widows and orphans. We recommend that widows be given a large enough sum of money which could yield an adequate annuity if invested. Orphans and children of women widowed during the disturbances should be provided with free education along with a suitable stipend to take care of their maintenance so long as their studies are not completed.

Trucks, private cars, scooters, taxis, auto-rickshaws, cycle-rickshaws and other vehicles were destroyed in their hundreds. In the majority of cases, these vehicles, whether owned or hired, provided the owners with their means of livelihood. Ad hoc compensation should be given for all damaged or destroyed vehicles in cases where the insurance cover did not include damage during riot or civil commotion. If a particular kind of vehicle is in short supply, directives should be issued to ensure priority supply.

Many victims are not willing to return to their former residential areas. Suitable alternative sites should be provided, comparable to their previous places of residence. Relocation of widows should be effected only after due consultation with them and their individual consent obtained as far as possible.

For loss of business or damage to premises, factories or stock-in-trade, where they were uninsured, interest-free loans for a restricted period should be authorised. If this is not found possible, at least the differential rate of interest should be extended to them.

The Commission was informed that in some areas women had been abducted. Vigorous steps should be taken to recover and reunite them with their families.

By extending protection to Sikhs, some non-Sikh individuals sustained damage to their property. Generous compensation should be given to such persons who risked their lives and property in this endeavour.

To those whose houses, shops or factories were destroyed or damaged, controlled items, amongst them building materials, should be supplied on a priority basis and at a concessional price. Delhi, being the capital, is a microcosm of the country. Its police force should represent this variety to the maximum extent feasible bearing in mind other service requirements and desiderata. As recent events have shown, the present force has forfeited public confidence. Serious thought should therefore be given to its reorganisation.

Concerns

In earlier chapters, we have outlined the grim events as factually and objectively as possible as well as the findings and conclusions flowing therefrom. It is evident that the social fabric has suffered severe damage, that the law was held in open contempt and brazenly defied, and that the administration was totally ineffective. To revive a humane society, to restore the authority of the law and to redeem respect for the administration are the most serious concerns for the future.

To remedy the intensive damage done to the social and political structure of the Republic by the recent events will require sustained effort and dedicated application. We fear that even the few obvious and basic measures that we have proposed for the purpose will have scant effect, unless a live political and administrative will is aroused in the corridors of power to implement them, in the spirit in which they have been made.

Countless reports and recommendations, supported by public opinion, for toning up the administration, giving primacy to the maintenance of law and order above all political considerations throughout the country, and for making the equality guaranteed to every citizen under the Constitution a living reality, have had little or no effect so far on successive Governments.

Our hope is that the stark reality of the sad degeneration of our present administration, exposed most recently by current events, its unpreparedness, demoralisation and ineptitude in the face of a crisis in the very heart of the country, will at last arouse that political will to ensure the dignity, security and wellbeing of law-abiding citizens who have put their trust in the Government.

The inculcation of habits of mental and physical discipline of a high order in administrative officers and the custodians of law and order, fortified by the provision of adequate service conditions and encouragement to imbibe the true culture of public service, is an essential prerequisite of good government. Only by paying constant attention to the efficient functioning of the administration and by ensuring its rectitude and impartiality, vigilance and initiative can the civil services be depended upon, especially in times of crisis, to prove equal to their responsibilities. The Commission is appalled to note from the examples before it, how far the civil services have fallen below the expected standards.

All political parties who have been in power at the Centre or in the States are in one way or the other responsible for bringing about this steady deterioration in the quality and morale of the civil services. The constant political interference in the day-to-day functioning of administration, resulting in lack of initiative and shelving of responsibility, has largely brought about the present malaise. Some senior members of the services have also contributed towards this by conniving at and acquiescing in such acts of commission and omission.

The deplorable happenings in Delhi provide a stern warning of future dangers on an even larger scale, if urgent remedial measures are not promptly taken. "The sense of culpability projected against all Sikhs for the senseless aberrations of a few, has resulted in a grievous fracture of the secular ideal and has grave implications for the unity and integrity of our country. This distorted concept of attributing guilt by association is illogical, negates the rule of law and undermines the foundations of an orderly society.

If any community, major or minor, develops a siege mentality, either defensively or as a result of circumstances, the entire concept of national unity is endangered. This calls for anxious consideration and rectification. All political leaders and responsible citizens must give serious and urgent consideration to the situation and devise measures to rectify it. If any section of citizens is made to feel unwanted or insecure, this can give rise to a ripple effect which could spread far and wide. Extra-legal retribution in any form, either against an individual or a group, has to be rejected and condemned as uncivilised, immoral and contrary to the principles of our Constitution and the foundations of our society.

This vast subcontinent, reaching down from the Himalayas to the waters of the Indian Ocean, its arms stretching out to the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, nurtures a variety of peoples and cultures, ethnicities and religions, all closely inter-linked by a long common history and a common destiny. This has been cemented by a Constitution under which all share equal citizenship rights, ideals and obligations. If any of the links binding the Indian nation together is weakened, it impairs the strength and resilience of the whole.

If the Sikhs, the valiant guardians of our Western marches who have fully contributed to the independence of our country and to its progress and prosperity, feel injured or alienated, it weakens the fabric of our society and the vitality of our nation. To restore fully our ancient society to its pristine health and vigour is an urgent task for the country as a whole so that all peoples comprising this vast mosaic may, in unity and strength, march confidently forward to a better future.

APPENDIX ' A '

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra

Circular Road

New Delhi-110 021

5th December 1984

DR. P. C. ALEXANDER,
Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister,
Prime Minister's Office,
South Block,
New Delhi-110 001

Dear Dr. Alexander,

On behalf of the Citizens' Commission consisting of myself and the following:

RAJESHWAR DAYAL, Former Foreign Secretary, Visiting Fellow, Oxford University

GOVIND NARAIN, Former Governor of Karnataka and Home and Defence Secretary

T.C.A. SRINIVASVARADAN, Former Home Secretary

B. F. H.B. TYABJI, Former Commonwealth Secretary and former Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University

I am enclosing a note prepared by us drawing the attention of the Government to the most urgent steps that in our view are required to give a sense of re-assurance to the victims of the recent atrocities in Delhi to enable them to settle down and earn their livelihood as self-respecting members of our society.

We should like you to be good enough to submit this note to the Prime Minister and arrange a very early meeting of the Commission with him.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

S.M. SIKRI

Former Chief Justice of India

CITIZENS' COMMISSION

Regarding the serious incidents of murder, arson, loot, etc. arising out of the breakdown of law and order in Delhi from 31 October to 4 November 1984.

We have visited several affected areas and seen for ourselves the results of the breakdown of law and order in Delhi between 31 October 1984 and 4 November 1984. We have spoken to a large number of the victims of the ensuing disorder, lawlessness, rapine, loot, rape and murder. We have also discussed the existing situation with a representative number of workers of various voluntary organisations actively engaged in relief work in dispelling the feeling of panic, insecurity and helplessness prevailing among those affected, and in bringing hope, and promoting a feeling of solidarity between them and the rest of Indian society.

In the light of this, and our own past experience in dealing with similar situations, we venture to make the following recommendations for the immediate consideration of the Government:

1. Those persons against whom prima facie evidence exists for having committed or instigated heinous crimes should not be allowed to remain at large. Some of them were arrested by the police, but have been released on bail and are still spreading terror in their areas. Their movements should be severely restrained and closely supervised, if they cannot be put behind bars, till they are properly tried in a court of law. Special courts should be set up for the purpose. Election propaganda needs also to be scrutinised and if necessary restrained from this point of view.
2. The various forms required to be filled in by the victims for securing relief for loss of life or destruction of property, etc., are required to be verified by local residents. Often, persons accused of having committed crimes and spreading terror and who, in any case, have lost their credibility are the very people who are asked to verify these claims. This is obviously absurd. Equally so is the insistence on the production of death certificates from

the families of murdered kinsmen, husbands, etc. The verification work should be entrusted to impartial persons of unquestionable credibility. We have come across many cases in which claims for loss of life or destruction of property have not been verified and consequently rejected in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

3. Immediate measures are required to be taken for the relief and rehabilitation of the large number of widows with small children left without any adult male member in the family to support them. We welcome the announcement appearing in the press on behalf of the Lt. Governor that some camps near the original residences are being established for this purpose. We should like to stress that widows belonging to one locality should not be separated from each other or from their fellow victims from that area. As far as possible they should be kept together because that will give them a sense of reassurance, security and psychological relief. Suitable work and training programmes should be provided for them together with arrangements for the education of their children.

4. Those whose houses have been made uninhabitable will need suitable dwelling places. We understand that some DDA flats in areas close to the original residences are available, which should be allotted to the homeless until they are either able to repair their homes or make other arrangements.

5. Those who have lost their means of livelihood need immediate relief for starting their vocations. Many vehicles of auto-rickshaw drivers and truck owners have been destroyed. Most of these vehicles were insured only against third party risks while the few that were insured comprehensively were not covered against civil commotion. Therefore they will not receive any compensation from the insurance companies. In such cases, interest-free loans should be arranged by the Government to procure new vehicles. Similarly, those who have lost their shops or other sources of business should be enabled to get loans at a concessional rate of interest. 6. The present criteria for granting relief are grossly inadequate for meeting the needs of the very large number of afflicted people. These should be revised on a realistic basis.

We seek a very early audience with the Prime Minister to put before him the above points; and to propose that he may set up immediately a high powered Committee comprising a member of his cabinet and senior representatives of the ministries concerned including the finance ministry, with full powers and authority to take final decisions on all matters coming up before it. The Committee should be empowered to issue mandatory directions to all concerned to ensure the prompt and speedy implementation of their recommendations.

APPENDIX ' B '

DR. P. C. ALEXANDER,
Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister,
Prime Minister's Office,
South Block,
New Delhi-110 001
6th December 1984

S.M. SIKRI
Vishwa Yuvak Kendra
Circular Road
New Delhi-110 021

Dear Sikri,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of 5th December, 1984 and the note containing the recommendations of the Citizens' Commission enclosed with it. I will be placing this matter before the Prime Minister.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Sd/-)

P.C. ALEXANDER

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister,

APPENDIX ' C '

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra

Circular Road

New Delhi-110 021

19th December 1984

DR. P. C. ALEXANDER,
Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister,
Prime Minister's Office,
South Block,
New Delhi-110 001

Dear Dr. Alexander,

Please refer to your letter No. pmS-32116, dated 6th December, 1984 acknowledging receipt of our earlier letter of 5th December. Your letter was received by us only on the 11th. We would be grateful to know if our Note has been placed before the Prime Minister and whether the Prime Minister would be meeting us in the near future.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

S.M. SIKRI

Former Chief Justice of India

APPENDIX ' D '

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra

Circular Road

New Delhi-110 021

20th December 1984

P.V. NARASIMHA RAO,
Minister of Home Affairs,
Government of India,
New Delhi.

My dear Home Minister,

On behalf of the Citizens' Commission consisting of myself and the following:

RAJESHWAR DAYAL, Former Foreign Secretary, Visiting Fellow, Oxford University

GOVIND NARAIN, Former Governor of Karnataka and Home and Defence Secretary

T.C.A. SRINIVASVARADAN, Former Home Secretary

B. F. H.B. TYABJI, Former Commonwealth Secretary and former Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University

I enclose a Note prepared by us containing some specific aspects on which we would be very grateful to have your observations and advice. We would be further grateful if you would kindly appoint a time for us to meet you at a very early date about this urgent public matter.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

S.M. SIKRI

Former Chief Justice of India

We have during the last four weeks visited several widely scattered refugee camps and gurdwaras in different parts of the city and examined a large number of victims as well as eye-witnesses of the outrages in which many innocent persons have been butchered and burnt in unmentionable savagery, women raped and shops and houses looted and destroyed. They have all testified before us that policemen when they were present not only did not lift a finger to save them and to curb the riotous mobs but actively abetted the rioters by;

1. tricking the victims that they would be safe if they went into their houses, and then;
2. telling the rioters that they could now attack the victims, which they did.

The police stations were totally unhelpful if any police officer was present. Most of the police officers were unaccountably found to be unavailable or absent from the station. It was generally alleged that the refusal of the police or its significant absence from the scenes of carnage, often located within a stone's throw from well-manned police stations, was in response to some directive. We have not heard the version of the police or of the persons with political connections frequently named, as we have no means available of hearing their version.

The names of the mob leaders, murderers, arsonists and rapists have come up repeatedly, but they still appear to be at large terrorising their localities. We have not heard of cases being tried or any convictions or even of investigations being conducted in the stricken areas.

That such savagery should have taken place in the capital city of India, and raged unhindered for three or four days, of which the Sikh community were the direct victims, but all law-abiding citizens felt threatened and their faith gravely shaken in the state's organ of security, is a matter of grave concern. It is of fundamental importance to take immediate action, even so long after the grievous outrages, to restore a sense of reassurance to the Sikh community in particular and to the public at large. The danger which the country faces is that, if such merciless bestiality can be allowed to take place unchecked, the very fabric of the mosaic of India's unity in diversity, secularism and security will be gravely imperilled.

We would therefore place before the authorities under whose charge the city of Delhi lies, the questions that arise from our extensive enquiries and which are being widely asked by the concerned public:

1. We gather that the news about grievous bullet injuries to the late Prime Minister by her own security guards was fairly widespread in Delhi by 9.30 am on 31 October. What

preventive measures were taken by the administration and the police to safeguard law and order and prevent harm to life and property?

2. The local papers had brought out supplements by about 2 pm on 31 October announcing the late Prime Minister's death. Following this some disturbances including burning of vehicles had started in the area around AIIMS and Laxmibai Nagar on the same day by 5 pm or so. Did the administration and the police enforce intensive precautionary and preventive measures in all the areas with Sikh population?

3. Did the administration have an updated Internal Security Scheme and were copies supplied to all concerned including all the police stations? Was the Internal Security Scheme enforced? If so, when?

4. Did the administration have adequate police force at its command — the civil and the armed police? If yes, were they deployed in sufficient strength according to standing plans for law and order duties besides catering to the requirements of the funeral?

5. If the police force was inadequate for both these big essential requirements, was help sought from the CRP, the BSF or the Army? If so, when?

6. Most of the victims we have met have complained that they sought the assistance of the local police, then of the police control but did not get any help. Were there any particular constraints or limitations?

7. Numerous complaints have been made to us that while heinous crimes of looting, arson, rape and murder by burning humans alive, were being committed in various areas on 1 to 3 November, no effective measures were taken against the criminal mobs. It has been suggested that the trouble could have been contained if curfew had been imposed on 31 October and if the army had been called out on the 1 November morning with full instructions to put an end to these crimes. We would like to know what was the thinking and assessment of the administration.

8. Complaints have been made to us that the Army was called very late and even when it came, the officers and men had no clear-cut instructions and they were not provided with guides to direct them to the affected areas. We would like to have the official comments.

9. What system was adopted to ensure effective liaison, coordination and communication among the administration, Delhi Police BSF, CRP and the army, and when did this start operating?

10. We have received many complaints that persons whom the victims had seen, recognised and named as the criminals involved in these various heinous crimes, are still at large and they are still intimidating and terrorising the refugees wanting to return to their homes. Are there any reasons why the normal law is not being enforced? Couldn't these culprits be detained till they are tried by Special Courts?.

11. People would like to know how many persons were arrested or tried for violation of 144 Cr PC orders or for the breach of curfew.
12. People would like to know on how many occasions the Police or the Army resorted to firing to prevent rioting, arson, loot or murder and with what result.
13. People will also like to know how many culprits have been put on trial and how long will it take to complete the proceedings.
14. We gather that intimidating rumours are still being sedulously circulated and the affected community is still apprehensive that there may be a repetition of what it suffered earlier. Has the administration prepared itself adequately to be able to deal with such a situation if it arises again, or if so why are steps not being taken to convey this assurance to those most afflicted by the past occurrences.
15. It has been stated before us that the police were present, were indifferent and in some places they even instigated and encouraged the criminal mobs. There are also some eye-witness accounts that the police themselves indulged in looting and other crimes. Such actions are not only reprehensible but would shake the faith and confidence of the people in the machinery created for their safety and security. What action is being taken to bring such culprits to book and to set an example against the repetition of such activities.
16. It has been stated before us that some local leaders of a political party were leading and instigating mobs indulging in arson, loot, killing, etc. These local leaders are said to be still at large and they are a cause of continuing panic and insecurity. Why are such instigators and abettors not being apprehended?
17. It has been stated before us that as soon as they found it possible many victims have lodged their FIRs before the police but no investigation, apprehension of identified culprits or search for the looted property have been started even after the lapse of so much time. Why should this be so?
18. It has been alleged before us, and the all round circumstances stated before us suggest that there was a plan and a conspiracy to teach the Sikhs a lesson and as a part thereof the administration and the police became inactive from 1 to 3 November. This for any civilised society would be reprehensible and intolerable. What steps are being contemplated to go to the root of the problem and ascertain the truth in order to ensure that such a paralysis of the administrative machinery does not recur and the life and property of all peace loving citizens are fully protected, irrespective of caste, creed, religion or political beliefs?

APPENDIX ' E '

No. 5462/SG-HMP(D)

Addl. Private Secretary

Home Ministry

India

26th December 1984

S.M. SIKRI

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra

Circular Road

New Delhi-110 021

Dear Sir,

In the absence of Home Minister on tour I am desired to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter dated 20th December, 1984 enclosing a note on the recent happenings.

It will be placed before the Hon'ble Home Minister on his return, With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

S.K. JAIN

APPENDIX ' F '

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra

Circular Road

New Delhi-110 021

4th January 1985

RAJIV GANDHI,

Prime Minister of India,

New Delhi.

My dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Citizens' Commission, I had addressed a letter to your Principal Secretary, on December 5, 1984, enclosing a note for you regarding the tragic happenings in Delhi from October 31 to November 4, 1984. A copy is forwarded for ready reference. We received an acknowledgement (No. pmS-32116) dated 6 December, 1984 saying that the matter would be placed before you. As we did not hear anything further we sent him a reminder on December 19, 1984, to which we have yet to receive a reply.

As the matters dealt with in our communication are of great public importance and urgency, we shall be grateful if you would kindly let us know when it would be convenient for you to receive us.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

S.M. SIKRI

Former Chief Justice of India

APPENDIX ' G '

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra

Circular Road

New Delhi-110 021

4th January 1985

S.B. CHAVAN,

Minister of Home Affairs

Government of India,

New Delhi.

My dear Home Minister,

On behalf of the Citizens' Commission, I had written a letter dated 20th December, 1984 to your predecessor to which we received an interim reply No. 5462/SG-HMP(D) dated 26th December, 1984, from the Addl. Private Secretary.

In our letter we had requested an interview, and had enclosed a set of pertinent questions relating to the recent tragic happenings in Delhi from the 31st October to 4th November, 1984. Copies are enclosed for ready reference.

Now that you have taken over charge of the Home Ministry, we would be grateful if you could kindly look into this very urgent matter and let us know when it will be convenient for you to receive us.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

S.M. SIKRI

Former Chief Justice of India